

UKRAINE CUSTOMS

Greetings:

When meeting informally, men and women usually wave the hand and give a verbal greeting like *Pryvit* (Hi) or *Dobryj den'* (Good day). *Dobryj den'* is also appropriate in formal situations, in which case people often shake hands.

Men wait for women to extend their hand first. In official situations, Ukrainians use titles, including professional titles and *Pan* (Mr.), *Pani* (Mrs.), *Panna* (Miss), or *Panove* ("Sirs" or "Gentlemen").

Gestures:

It is important to establish eye contact a few times (but not constantly) during a conversation. Facial expressions are reserved. Smiling at strangers is rare and viewed as flirtatious.

Approval is expressed by nodding the head. Pointing with the index finger is considered uncultured, but some people do it anyway.

To speak to a superior (teacher, boss, official, or senior) with one's hands in the pockets or arms folded across the chest is viewed as disrespectful and cause for reprimand.

Chewing gum while talking is also improper.

Women expect some chivalry from men. It is rude for a man to not open a door for a woman.

Holidays:

On New Year's, Ukraine's most popular holiday, people decorate fir trees and have parties that often last through the night.

Religious holidays are regaining prominence. Christmas, celebrated on 25 December by Catholics and on 7 January by Orthodox Christians, is particularly popular in western Ukraine and rural areas.

During the Christmas season, children go door-to-door to receive candies and cookies in exchange for *koliadki* (Christmas carols) and jokes. Easter is observed throughout the country. Family and friends gather to visit and prepare painted eggs and *paskha* (special cakes).

National holidays include International Women's Day (8 Mar.), Solidarity Day (1 May), Victory Day (9 May), and Independence Day (24 Aug.). An old holiday, Soviet Army Day (23 Feb.) is unofficially celebrated as a sort of Men's Day.

Victory Day marks the end of World War II and is extremely important to most families.